CITY OF HUNTSVILLE VISITOR CENTER EXPANSION



Facility Assessment
October 30, 2015

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FACILITY INTRODUCTION

SUMMARY

The existing City of Huntsville Visitors Center was constructed approximately 20 years ago. The campus consists of two main buildings. The main structure is considered the Visitors Center. The second building is the public restroom building. A third small storage building is also on the site. The main building condition is good for a building its age, however, the size of the facility is no longer adequate to handle the need or future demands. The condition of the exterior of the main building is good but will require maintenance work and refinishing to stop minor deterioration that has occurred from use and water. The main building interior is well kept but showing wear. The public toilet building, however, has shown its age and has some significant ADA issues. An upgrade finish and ADA accessibility update is recommended. The site is well maintained. Parking is inadequate. There is a picnic area behind the building with a mixture of different types of picnic benches and tables.

The Sam Houston statue base has some brick pavers on the base wall that came apart. The pavers should be replaced or repaired.

The primary concern related to the Visitors Center is the size of the main building. The building is currently 4,200 square feet short of the projected space requirements. The City staff are using creative measures to overcome the shortage of required space in the building to satisfy the needs.

The existing buildings have several ADA deficiencies that will need to be included in any renovation or addition of the building. These include restroom size and configuration. General maintenance is required for the building to provide for long term viability of use as the Visitors Center. These repairs will need to be addressed in any renovation.

Options to improve the operation of the Visitor Center include the following:

1. Renovate the existing building and construct a new 4,200 SF freestanding building, connected to the existing main building by a covered walkway. The

- architecture of the new building should be similar to the existing building reflecting the Sam Houston residence.
- 2. Increase the parking area for cars and buses.
- 3. Provide covered canopy for the amphitheater.
- 4. Provide walking trails and security lights that will allow the statue to be open to public after daylight. Add new benches and trails in the wooded area. Provide a perimeter fence with a control gate for this entire area.
- 5. Replace picnic tables with matching furniture.

Temporary relocation and associated costs may be required for some of these improvements.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The Sam Houston Statue & Visitors Center is located south edge of the City of Huntsville. The building faces State Hwy 75. The Sam Houston statue faces Interstate 45. The existing Visitors Center is located in a wooded park that includes a picnic area and an open air amphitheater.

The Visitors Center is served by a small surface parking lot that contains approximately 29 spaces with accommodations for 2 buses. The site is fronted on Hwy 75. The facility is short on parking in its current size. With the expanded programs, an additional 15 car parking spaces will be needed. Overflow parking has spilled over to the Hwy 75 and the property across the street.

The Statue is visible from Interstate 45. The Visitors Center is only visible from Hwy 75. A sign has to be posted facing Interstate 45 to notify patrons how to get to the Visitors Center. The site is open 24/7 to allow visitors to walk the grounds and view the statue. The buildings on the complex are only open during daylight hours. There has not been reports of any security issues.

The existing open air amphitheater gets frequent use. It would be used more if there was shade provided. The site has a large wooded area that is mostly unused. Adding to the trail system would better utilize the site.

BUILDING DESCRIPTION

The Sam Houston statue was constructed in 1994 with the Visitors Center was constructed shortly thereafter. There are three structures that compose the Visitors Center. The main building contains approximately 2,500 conditioned square feet, with an expansive porch on all four sides of the building that accommodates staging of visitors. The main building contains the chamber exhibit, brochure display, a gift shop, offices, and a break room/kitchenette. One small toilet room is provided for the employees. A second building contains public restrooms. The restroom building is open 24/7. The third building is a temporary storage building. The buildings are constructed with wood siding and metal standing seam metal roofing.

BUILDING USE

The buildings and site are used for recreational purposes, receiving visitor and tour groups, and education for the visitors.

The main building is staffed by City personnel and volunteers working when the building is open. The number of visitors can vary, dependent on season. Scheduled visits are made by tour groups that occasionally arrive in buses. The Visitors Center highest use is in the summer months and during holidays.

Building Use Analysis

The existing buildings are completely occupied. All spaces are normally fully utilized to the maximum capacity. The chamber exhibit space currently is undersized. A portion of it is being used as employee work space. Staff work areas are commingled with public areas that creates privacy and work interference issues. There is not a designated space for video presentation and educational purposes. Brochures are stored in a separate temporary building that subjects them to water damage.

Spaces that are under sized or missing:

Chamber Exhibit: This space needs to be reclaimed from of all employee work spaces in order to meet the requirements for programming.

Educational Space: The programming needs a multifunction room for video presentation and education programs. This room can also be used for community or City use after hours.

Brochure Storage: Brochures are currently stored in a separate temporary building. The brochure storage capacity needs to be significantly enlarged and placed within the main building.

Public Restrooms: The number of existing restrooms is sufficient for the normal use of the building, however, they are non-ADA compliant, and need to be refreshed with better finishes and flooring that resist stain and are easy to clean.

Staff Restrooms: The staff has access to one small single use toilet located behind the existing gift shop. This toilet room is small and not ADA compliant.

BUILDING SKIN

The building skin is wood siding with brick fireplaces. The windows are insulated glass. All windows have wood shutters that are permanently closed.

The roofing system is a standing seam metal roof. The roof drainage is collected in perimeter gutters and surfaced drained to local area drains. Due to the nature surrounding trees on the site, the roof collects leaves that regularly clog the gutters. Clogged gutters have allowed water to infiltrate in the building. There is evidence of a roof leak in the ceiling, walls, and rotting wood roof supports.

The condition of the building skin is consistent with the age of the building. The masonry fireplace cladding appears to be in good shape. The exterior wood needs to be sealed or painted. Deteriorated wood needs to be replaced. The roof gutters needs to be cleaned and repaired. The roof leaks needs to be repaired. The deteriorated roof structure needs to be repaired and replaced where damaged.

The existing exterior porch is in good shape with the exception of the wood guard rails around the porch.

The guard rail supports are not properly attached to the wood deck and in some areas have rotted wood that needs to be replaced. The entire railing system needs to be replaced.

INTERIOR BUILD-OUT

The interior walls in the main building are gypsum board clad wood framed walls that are finished and painted. The interior walls at the toilet room building are painted CMU. The floors throughout are exposed concrete. The staff toilet room has a ceramic tile floor. The decking of the covered porch around the main building is painted wood decking.

Interior Build-out Analysis

The interior build-out is worn but generally in good shape. Refreshing of the existing finishes should be part of a planned renovation. The staff toilet room is well maintained. The public restrooms need to be refinishing and upgraded to meet ADA accessibility requirements.

Restroom Analysis

The staff toilet is does have grab bars, however, does not meet the ADA requirements. In order to bring this toilet room into compliance, the room will need to be enlarged and reconfigured. The public restroom finishes are old and deteriorating. The walls are painted CMU and although serviceable, not attractive and need to be refinished. The existing floors are exposed concrete that is stained and retains an odor. These public restrooms also do not meet ADA requirements.

ADA EVALUATION

This report does not exhaustively evaluate this building for compliance with the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (TDLR) requirements. Noted deficiencies include the following:

- Hardware handles
- Non-compliant sinks and related millwork
- Restroom clearances
- Door clearances at restrooms
- Sink insulated pipes
- Public route
- Toilet room equipment encroach into walkway

MECHANICAL SYSTEMS

The building's mechanical systems appear to be functioning properly. The air handlers appear to be original to the building and are approaching end of life. The air handlers should be expected to require additional maintenance as they reach the end of expected life.

ELECTRICAL SYSTEMS

The building electrical systems are performing as required. Additional electrical capacity for programming is desired. The electrical panels are close to being at maximum circuit capacity. The existing incandescent spot lights in the chamber exhibit and gift shop constantly needs replacement. New long life LED lights are recommended.

LIFE SAFETY SYSTEMS

The building does not have a fire alarm system. The building does not have a fire suppression system. It is recommended that a fire alarm system be provided due to large numbers of people that can be in the facility.

CODE COMPLIANCE

The buildings generally appear to be incompliance with applicable building codes required at the time of construction. Paths of egress are available and appear to be sufficient for expected occupancies.

DEPARTMENT: CONTACT (Name, Number, Email):

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Employes Parking Aikilbonal Public Parking Bus Parking Plonic area Photo op area Enclosed parking for City vehicle

b spaces 15 spaces 2 buses total 8 picnic tables

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Project Priorities

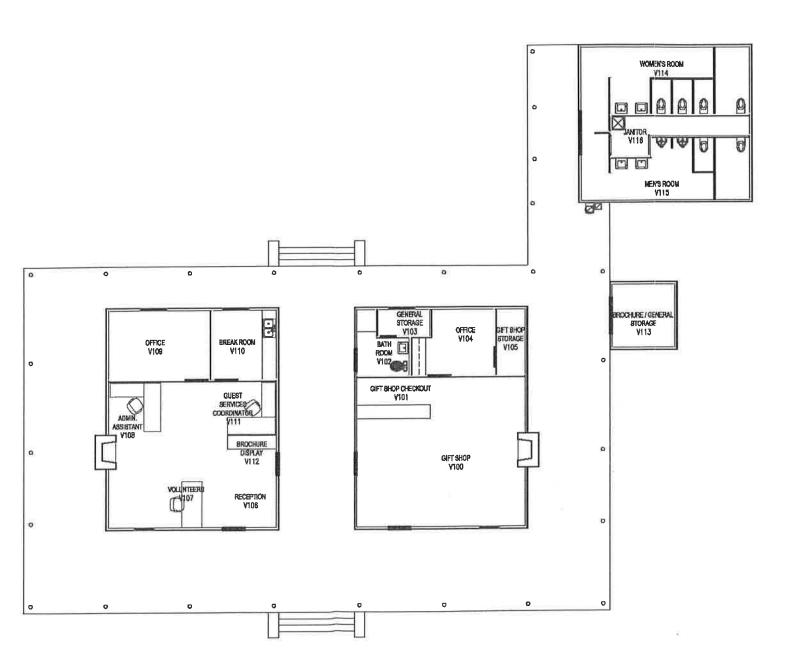
1 Building, Parking, Landscape Furniture (henches and tables)

2-Amphiticader Cover

3 Park Frail

1 Buddon Rebussical Continuum Statum

FACILITY SPACE PLANS



FACILITY ASSESSMENT

- CONDITION: Parking not ADA compliant REPAIR: Provide compliant parking spaces
- CONDITION: Non-code compliant handrail.

 REPAIR: Replace with code compliant handrail.
- CONDITION: Site furniture not matching.

 REPAIR: Provide matching site furniture for coherent aesthetic.
- CONDITION: Missing masonry caps on site wall. REPAIR: Replace.
- CONDITION: Leaves collected on roof
 REPAIR: Periodic removal of plant materials on roof

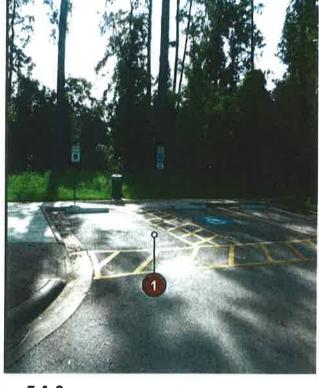


Figure 7-1-2

Exterior Southwest Site at Parking

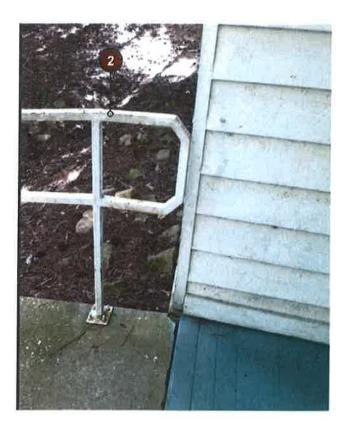


Figure 7-1-3Exterior Southwest Site at Parking

Legend



Figure 7-1-4
Exterior Southwest Site at Parking



Figure 7-1-5

Picnic Area



Figure 7-1-7

Statue Base



Figure 7-1-6

Picnic Area



Figure 7-1-8

Building Northwest

- CONDITION: Plant growing in rain gutter.
 REPAIR: Periodic maintenance cleaning of gutters.
- **CONDITION:** Roof support rotting due to roof leak. **REPAIR:** Repair roof leak and replace roof support.
- CONDITION: Water mark indication of roof leak to interior of building.

REPAIR: Repair roof leak and paint wall.

CONDITION: Guardrail support not properly anchored, allowing excessive flex and in some cases are rotting.

REPAIR: Remove and replace support posts with proper attachment to deck and provide gap between wood posts and deck to prevent water absorption to bottom of post.



Figure 7-1-9

Exterior Building Northeast



Figure 7-1-10

Exterior at Front Porch

Legend



Figure 7-1-11

Exterior at Front Porch

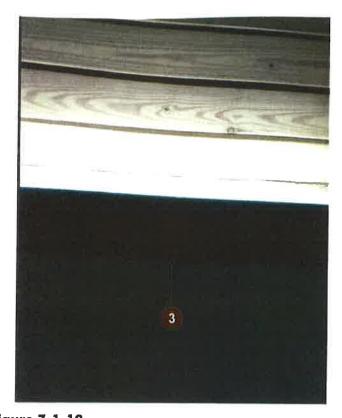


Figure 7-1-12
Chamber Exhibit V112



Figure 7-1-14

Porch



Figure 7-1-13

Entrance

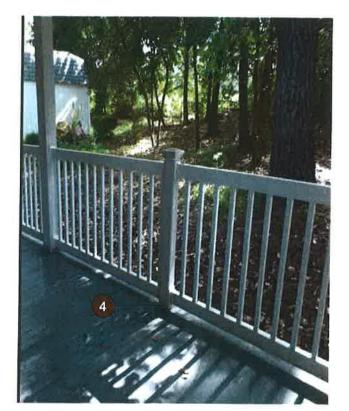


Figure 7-1-15

Porch

- CONDITION: Attic hatch deteriorating.
 REPAIR: Replace.
- CONDITION: No weep hole at brick veneer wall, causing efflorescent.

 REPAIR: Provide weep holes and/or building sealing.
- CONDITION: Wood trim detached from wall REPAIR: Repair or replace.
- CONDITION: Crack in concrete floor, REPAIR: Repair with epoxy.
- CONDITION: Incandescent lights required constant replacement.

 REPAIR: Replace with high efficiency and long life
- CONDITION: Electrical panel too close in proximity to water source.

 REPAIR: Move sink.
- CONDITION: Sink not ADA compliant.

 REPAIR: Replace sink and millwork to comply.



Figure 7-1-16

Exterior at Breezeway

3

Figure 7-1-18
Exterior Building Northwest

Legend

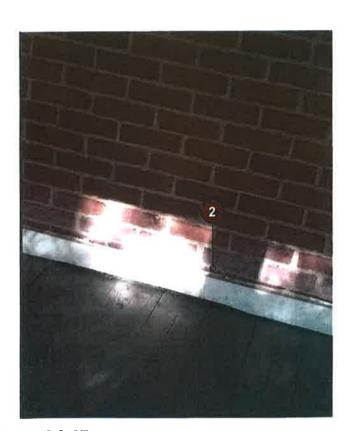


Figure 7-1-17
Exterior Building West



Figure 7-1-20 Chamber Exhibit V112



Figure 7-1-21 Break Room V110



Chamber Exhibit V112



Figure 7-1-22 Break Room V110

- CONDITION: Incandescent lights required constant replacement.

 REPAIR: Replace with high efficiency and long life bulbs.
- CONDITION: Service counter not ADA compliant REPAIR: Provide section of counter to comply.
- CONDITION: Toilet room not ADA compliant. REPAIR: Provide ADA compliant toilet room.
- CONDITION: Conditioned storage space without insulation.

REPAIR: Provide insulation to this conditioned storage space.

- CONDITION: Door frame paint deterioration and rust.

 REPAIR: Remove rust and paint.
- **CONDITION:** Toilet room floor stained. **REPAIR:** Clean and coat with water repellent coating or tile.

REPAIR: Provide weep holes and / or seal building





Figure 7-1-24

Gift Shop V100



Figure 7-1-23

Gift Shop V100



Figure 7-1-25

Bathroom V102



Figure 7-1-26
Brochure/General Storage V113



Figure 7-1-28 Men's Room V115



Figure 7-1-27 Janitor V116



Figure 7-1-29 Men's Room V115

- CONDITION: Toilet room floor stained.

 REPAIR: Clean and coat with water repellent coating or tile. Provide weep holes and / or seal building.
- CONDITION: Sink pipes not covered per ADA. REPAIR: Provide pipe covers.
- CONDITION: Hand dryer protrudes more than 4" from wall in path of travel not ADA compliant.

 REPAIR: Provide ADA compliant hand dryer.



Legend



Men's Room V115

Figure 7-1-30 Men's Room V115

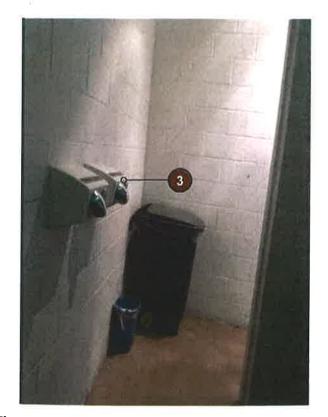


Figure 7-1-32

Men's Room V115